



BOA 16 to 19 Bursary Policy

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Introduction

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is intended to help eligible students overcome specific financial barriers so they can remain in education. The fund is split into two types of bursary:

- Vulnerable Student Bursary
- Discretionary Bursary.

Both types are designed to meet the essential costs of participation, such as paying for school travel and purchasing essential books and equipment.

This policy outlines the criteria, processes and conditions for the use and allocation of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund at BOA Creative, Digital and Performing Arts Academy (BOA). It is based on the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) and should be read in conjunction with the full terms and conditions set out in the DfE's [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027](#).

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to receive the 16 to 19 Bursary in the 2026-27 academic year at BOA, a student must live in England and be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026. Where a student turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of their programme of study, whichever is sooner.

Additional eligibility criteria, specific to the two types of bursary (Vulnerable Student Bursary and Discretionary Bursary), are given below. Please note: the funding provided to each eligible student is based on actual financial need, as supported by evidence.

Vulnerable Student Bursary

The Vulnerable Student Bursary is paid to students in the following defined vulnerable groups:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) – in their own name
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in addition to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC – in their own name.

Please note: all benefits listed above must be received by the student, in their own right.

Eligibility must be proven by relevant official documentation, such as:

- Letters from social services relating to young people in care or previously in care
- Letters confirming nominated benefits (as listed above) from the relevant local authority.

Students who meet the criteria for the Vulnerable Student Bursary can receive up to £1,200 per year in support of their education at BOA; however, students will only receive the amount they actually need to participate, calculated on a case-by-case basis.

Students' eligibility will be reviewed each academic year. Students will only continue to receive the bursary for vulnerable groups if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

Discretionary Bursary

The Discretionary Bursary is paid to students experiencing financial difficulty. The main criterion employed by the Academy is gross household income, with funds awarded to students who can demonstrate a gross household income of £28,000 or less, as evidenced by receipt of benefit and/or P60, Tax Credit Award notice, or evidence of self-employment income.

Students who do not satisfy this criterion, but who are able to demonstrate financial hardship arising for other reasons, may still apply for a Discretionary Bursary. In assessing any application for a Discretionary Bursary, a range of factors besides gross household income will be considered; these include but are not limited to:

- Distance and cost of travel between the student's home and the Academy
- The number of dependent children in the student's household
- Whether the student has additional responsibilities that may mean they need extra help.

All decisions around which students receive a Discretionary Bursary, and how much they receive (up to a maximum of £950 per year), will be based on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need. The levels of payment awarded to students also depend on the funds available each year and the number of applications received.

Students' eligibility will be reviewed each academic year. Students will only continue to receive the Discretionary Bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria, and the total funding available to each student may be adjusted in light of changes to gross household income and other circumstances.

Applications and Evidence

Practical information regarding the application process for the 16 to 19 Bursary can be found on the [Academy website](#), with a link provided to make an online application through Applicaa. If a paper application is required or should any help be needed in completing the application, contact should be made with Dr S May (Assistant Principal): 0121 359 9300 / simon.may@boa-academy.co.uk.

Applications should be submitted ideally by 30 September 2026 to allow enough time for the Academy to assess the overall level of demand and make awards for the year on a fair basis. However, it is understood that students' circumstances may change and therefore the application process will remain open throughout the academic year. If making a late application (i.e. after 30 September 2026), students and their parents/carers should notify Dr S May (contact details above) to ensure the application can be processed promptly.

All applications must be supported by appropriate evidence. The Academy will treat all information supplied under this policy as confidential and subject to the usual care and security measures.

Examples of acceptable evidence that may be requested include but are not limited to:

- For the Vulnerable Student Bursary: a copy of the IS or UC award notice, in the student's name; evidence of receipt of DLA, PIP or ESA, in the student's name
- For the Discretionary Bursary: UC payments covering a three-month period; P60; Tax Credit award notice; evidence of self-employment income.

Students and parents/carers will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing (via Applicaa), together with the amount of funding awarded (up to a maximum of £1,200 for the Vulnerable Student Bursary, and up to a maximum of £950 for the Discretionary Bursary – in both cases according to actual financial need).

Following a successful late application, payment amounts will be determined in most cases *pro rata* from when the student became eligible and the course length remaining. In exceptional circumstances, at the Principal's discretion, payments may be backdated; however, payments cannot be backdated to include the previous academic year as any unspent funds are recovered from the Academy on an annual basis by the DfE.

Details of how the outcome of an application can be appealed are provided below.

Please note: should a student's circumstances alter during the academic year such that they are no longer eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary, or eligible for a different maximum amount, it is the responsibility of the student and their parents/carers to inform Dr S May (contact details above) before any further payments are made; subsequent payments will then be amended or withheld, and a revised calculation of the student's award will be made.

Payments and Conditions

The funding awarded to each eligible student is based on their actual participation needs (supported by evidence) and is not a flat or fixed-rate payment that does not reflect the actual costs they face.

Given the location of BOA and the distances students travel to attend the Academy, bursary funds are typically put towards the costs of public transport. In such cases, payments are made in regular instalments via bank transfer directly to students, with arrangements as follows:

- The first payment of each academic year is made by the third week of October, allowing time for students to demonstrate good attendance (see below for additional conditions) and to provide sufficient evidence of the transport costs incurred; this first payment will include the back-dated costs of travel for the first half-term and will include the costs for the second half-term in advance
- All subsequent payments will be made at the start of each half-term. Please note: students in Year 13 may not be deemed to require a payment for the final half-term if they are no longer expected to attend the Academy in person.

Alongside support for their travel to BOA, students may also utilise their allocated bursary funds to cover costs such as travel to open days, interviews and auditions, course-related trips, and the purchasing of essential books and equipment. All requests must be supported by evidence and submitted through Applicaa for approval. Wherever possible, payments will be made in kind.

Once a student has reached their maximum award for the academic year, any further requests should be made only in exceptional circumstances and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to funds being available and with attention given to the purposes and expected benefits of the expenditure. Requests of this kind must be made in writing to Mr A Chattaway (Principal): 0121 359 9300 / principal@boa-academy.co.uk.

Please note: the DfE's [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide: 2026 to 2027](#) outlines costs that cannot be covered by the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, including general living costs (e.g. household bills) and non-essential extra-curricular activities. For students from lower income households, some support for extra-curricular participation may be available, separate from the bursary fund, at the discretion of the Principal. Requests of this kind must be made in writing to the Principal (contact details above).

In addition to the eligibility criteria detailed above, payments of bursary funds are conditional on students continuing to meet the following conditions in relation to their attendance and behaviour:

- Maintaining at least 95% attendance to all lessons and tutor periods
- Attending all examinations for which the student is entered
- Following the Academy's code of behaviour
- Meeting deadlines and expectations of effort within subject areas.

Continued payments from the bursary fund are also conditional on students providing receipts for expenditure. The Academy reserves the right to take back money from students where it is not spent for the reasons it was awarded.

Students will be required to sign a declaration confirming they agree to meet these conditions. Students who fail to meet them may have their bursary withdrawn, but individual circumstances (such as the impact on attendance that may be caused by illness, caring responsibilities or other exceptional circumstances) will always be considered. Where concerns arise, students will be provided with an opportunity to address any issues prior to their bursary award being affected. Any decision will be confirmed in writing, following at least one formal warning.

Decisions and Appeals

Vulnerable Student Bursaries are only available to students in a narrow range of circumstances. If external authorities do not deem a student to be eligible for the relevant benefit or designation listed in the eligibility criteria above, the student and/or their parents/carers must appeal to the relevant local authority in the first instance, with the option then to resubmit an application to the Academy once eligibility can be demonstrated.

The funds available for the Discretionary Bursary will vary from year to year. As detailed above, a range of factors will be considered when applications for the Discretionary Bursary are processed, but a student must have proven hardship, as evidenced by household documentation, to be eligible; this is typically determined by gross household income. If a student and/or parents/carers wish to appeal an application that is unsuccessful, they should in the first instance contact Dr S May (contact details above) and provide grounds for reconsideration, supplying any further evidence as required. A further appeal may then be made in writing to the Principal (contact details above).

In the case of both bursary types, the amount of funding awarded (up to a maximum of £1,200 for the Vulnerable Student Bursary, and up to a maximum of £950 for the Discretionary Bursary) will be based on actual financial need. If a student and/or parents/carers wish to appeal the amount of bursary funds awarded, they should (as above) in the first instance contact Dr S May (contact details above) and provide grounds for reconsideration, supplying any further evidence as required. A further appeal may then be made in writing to the Principal (contact details above).

In circumstances where students have their bursary withdrawn after failing to meet the conditions detailed above, if a student and/or parents/carers wish to appeal the decision to withdraw the bursary, they should write directly to the Principal (contact details above) within 5 working days of the decision letter being received; a decision regarding the appeal will then be communicated to the student and parents/carers within 5 working days of the appeal letter being received.

Alternative Support – Free School Meals

From September 2026, eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) will be expanded to include all children in households that receive UC, regardless of household earnings. This means that some students who are ineligible for the Discretionary Bursary may qualify for FSM, which takes the form of a daily discount at the BOA canteen. Details of how to apply and/or confirm eligibility for FSM can be found on the [Academy website](#) or by contacting Dr S May (contact details above) for more information.

Fraud

If it is found that a fraudulent claim has been made in regard to a student's entitlement to receive the Vulnerable Student Bursary or Discretionary Bursary (such as in relation to benefits awarded, designations held, or gross household income), the Academy will:

- Cease all further payments
- Take steps to recover any money paid out under the fraudulent claim, including legal measures as necessary.

Please note: students and/or parents/carers claiming any benefit fraudulently should also expect to be prosecuted by the relevant agency in question.

As detailed above in the 'Applications and Evidence' section of this policy, students and parents/carers should notify the school without delay – by contacting Dr S May (contact details above) – should there be any changes in circumstances or income that may affect eligibility, or the amount awarded, for the 16 to 19 Bursary.

Monitoring Arrangements

The processes outlined in this policy will be monitored by Dr S May, ensuring that applications and the provision of funds/payments in kind are administered appropriately and fairly, with due regard to the Equality Act 2010.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Dr S May; at every review, the policy will be approved by the Principal and Academy Governing Board, ensuring compliance with relevant DfE requirements.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that bursary funding is accounted for accurately, with records kept securely and readily available for audit purposes.

Parents/carers should notify the Academy if they have any concerns or queries regarding this policy, doing so in the first instance by contacting Dr S May or the Principal (contact details above).